



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 11, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the outcome of the meeting that took place November 5 between Georgian Prime Minister Zhvania and South Ossetian leader Kokoity. Both sides in the conflict are to be commended for reaching an agreement on the removal by November 20 of all armed formations, other than the Joint Peacekeeping Forces and authorized police, from the Zone of Conflict.

The United States also commends the OSCE Mission in Georgia and the Russian Federation for their active roles in promoting this dialogue between the two sides.

We also welcome the news that the Head of Mission, Ambassador Reeve, was able to reach agreement with Mr. Kokoity on expanding the number of Military Monitors to be allowed in the Zone of Conflict, as well as increasing the number that can be based in Tbilisi and rotate into the Zone of Conflict to provide relief. We look forward to an early draft decision to be submitted to the PC for consideration on this matter.

We call on both sides to adhere to the agreements reached at Sochi, and we urge the Joint Control Commission to work quickly toward implementation. We further urge the parties to continue their dialogue, as the two sides at Sochi clearly agreed on the need to hold further high-level meetings. Accepting an invitation by the Chairman-in-Office to meet in Sofia would be a very welcome follow-up.

The United States reiterates its support for a peaceful settlement of this fourteen-year-old conflict. Any resolution has to be achieved, however, through dialogue and with full respect for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you.